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NOV 22 2006

REMARKS

The Office Action of 08/22/2006 has been carefully considered. In response thereto, the claims have been amended as set forth above. Reconsideration and allowance in view of the present remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 7 and 8 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter, which indication is appreciatively acknowledged.

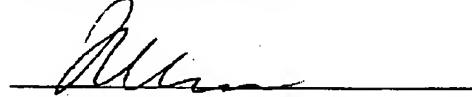
Claims 1-6 and 9 were rejected as being anticipated by Nakao. Claims 2, 4 and 5 have been canceled. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly distinguish over the cited reference. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the cited reference, separate comparison and control circuits (61, 51; 62, 52; etc.) are provided for each stage of a serial shift register.

In the present invention, on the other hand, a single comparison and control circuit is used to control more than two stages, and preferably all of the stages, of a serial shift register. Claim 1 has been amended to make this distinction more clear.

Withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claims 1-9 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: 11/22/06